

WCIRTA



Fall, 2017

Next Meeting

October 19

Mary's
Herrin

12:00 pm

Fall is upon us even though it doesn't feel like it (as of September 22). We have a budget and a school funding formula in place. I guess when things get bad enough people can work together to get things done. I have heard that the new school funding formula will be good for most Southern Illinois schools.

We have our next meeting on October 19 at Mary's in Herrin. See the related article for details. I am looking forward to eating there since I have heard good things about it but have not actually gone there. We will be hearing from Bill Funkhouser who always is very informative.

Since the last newsletter I visited my son, Aaron, his wife, Jennifer and my granddaughters, Lyla and Brielle in Minneapolis, MN. We spent over a week building a playhouse for my granddaughters. It is 12' by 8' on the inside with a 12' by 4' porch on the front. I love to work with my hands and take after my grandfather who was a carpenter(among other things). Some people who see pictures of it say that it is going to be where we live when we get older and need to live close to one of our children!

I hope to see you all on October 19th. Until then enjoy the beautiful fall colors that we have in Southern Illinois.

Kent Carrell, President WCIRTA

IRTA Area 6 Director to Speak at October 19 WCIRTA Meeting

Bill Funkhouser, the current Area 6 Representative to the Executive Board for the Illinois Retired Teachers Association, will address the membership of the Williamson County Retired Teachers Association at the next membership luncheon meeting at 12:00 noon on Thursday, October 19, 2017 at Mary's Restaurant in Herrin.

Bill, who has been the Area 6 representative to the board for ten years, has also announced his candidacy for Vice-President of the IRTA. He will update the members of WCIRTA about current happenings relative to retired educators and will explain his vision for the next several years if he is elected as vice-president of IRTA. Bill has been to several WCIRTA meetings in the past and his comments are always well received.

Put this item on your calendar NOW so that you do not miss this timely and informative presentation.

Re: Legislative Update

Fr: Anna Morris

The Non-Cycle: Thank goodness the recent eclipse gave us a temporary diversion from what used to be referred to as the “election cycle.” Instead of being a cycle, elections now preoccupy us from one day to the next without any recognizable letup. **This abuse of our brain’s ability to digest facts (and separate fact from fiction)** has been greatly fueled by modern technology such as Facebook, twitter, cable news, smart phones, the internet, Google, TV commercials, partisan newspaper look-alikes, apps, etc. **Also, many politicians seem to devote much of their time catering to major contributors** rather than their constituency, resulting in added confusion. **About all the typical retiree can do to cope is stay as broadly versed as possible while relying on their professional organizations, such as IRTA, for guidance.** Ear plugs and blinders might help a little, too.

School Funding Bill: After being unable to override the governor’s veto of SB1, the legislature finally passed a compromise school funding plan on August 29. It provides for a new funding formula which will result in additional monies for the state’s 800 school districts and is focused on reducing disparities between rich and poor schools. Additionally, it provides \$75 million in tax credits for people who contribute scholarships for private schools. It is estimated that these will assist about 10,000 students. The credits would be worth 75 percent of a taxpayer’s scholarship contribution, with a maximum of \$1 million annually. It will expire in five years unless re-enacted by the legislature. Students receiving scholarships must be from a family within certain income limitations (approximately \$73,000 for a family of four). Scholarships must be given to a specific school, not to a specific student. **This portion of the funding bill is generally opposed by teacher unions and some school officials.** Finally, the new legislation provides funds to Chicago Public Schools to assist them in making payments to its teacher pension fund.

Cost of living Adjustment: For those retirees receiving social security benefits, the Social Security Administration will announce its adjustment for the coming year in October. The increase will be based on the current consumer price index which is based on the rate of price inflation. Although most of us are aware that the cost of things keep going up, especially health care, annual increases over the past few years in social security checks has been only less than one percent. For the coming year, however, the Senior Consumer League estimates the adjustment for 2018 to be around 2.1 percent. As noted, the exact amount will not be announced until October.

911 Change—New Tax: Based on a new state mandate, Williamson County (and all others with a population less than 250,000) is consolidating its emergency 911 call centers that previously operated in Marion, Herrin, and the Sheriff’s department. Under the new arrangement by the Emergency Telephone Service Board, Marion will now handle 70 percent of all Williamson County’s 911 calls. **The added expense will be funded by a charge of about one dollar on cellphone bills.**

Change in 118th District: Long-serving representative Brandon Phelps has resigned his seat in the 118th representative district for health reasons. His appointed successor is his cousin and daughter of former Congressman David Phelps, Natalie Phelps Finnie. A nurse, wife, and mother, she plans to run for the office in next year’s election. Her potential republican opponent is the current Massac County State’s Attorney, Patrick Windhorst.

**Contact Information: Senator Dale Fowler 618-294-8951 217-782-5509 senatorfowler59@gmail.com
Representative Dave Severin 618-440-5090 217-782-1051**

Payment of WCIRTA Membership Dues Lagging

With only 3 months left in the fiscal year, nearly 200 WCIRTA members have not yet paid their \$10 dues for the 2017 calendar year. This issue was discussed briefly at the September Board Meeting and plans are to develop a program to correct the situation at the next board meeting. The membership voted last year to raise the dues to \$10 per year but several members have not yet paid for 2017. Why not send a check for your \$10 dues payment for 2017 to Treasurer Don Kragness at 14802 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951. . .and why not do it NOW!

October 19 WCIRTA Meeting to be at Mary's Restaurant in Herrin

The October 19 membership meeting of the WCIRTA will be held at noon in the Atrium at Mary's Restaurant in Herrin. Owner David Hays will be serving a buffet style meal with his famous Lasagna as the entrée. It will be served with an Italian Tossed Salad (including that tasty, made-from-scratch dressing) and French bread enhanced with Parmesan Cheese plus a beverage (coffee, tea, soft drink). The cost of the meal will be \$15 per person, which includes both tax and tip.

The meal will be served at precisely 12:00 Noon but members are urged to arrive at 11:30 AM to register, pay for the meal and greet fellow retirees. The program for the day, Area 6 Representative Bill Funkhouser, will follow the luncheon. Any business to be conducted will follow Bill's presentation. We hope to also have the new Superintendent of ROE 21, Lorie LeQuatte, in attendance.

Since the meal will be prepared just for those present, Mary's has requested that we provide them with a number in advance. In order to obtain an accurate estimate, we are asking you to contact us by email or phone to confirm your attendance and guarantee that we have a meal prepared for you. Please call or email one of the members of the board listed below to reserve your place at this meeting. We must have this information by noon on Monday, October 16, 2017. You will pay for your meal at the door on October 19. You may contact any board member to make your reservation.

Board Member	Email Address	Phone Number
Kent Carrell, President	kcarrell@gmail.com	993-6731 569-1899
Bert Gordon, Vice-President	bajegordon@frontier.com	942-6938
Betsy Murphy, Secretary	bmurphy1223@gmail.com	993-8953
Don Kragness, Treasurer	donjank1@gmail.com	983-5546
Bob Campbell, Past-President	bobc1939@gmail.com	751-0352
Anna Morris, Legislative	overlookmoi@gmail.com	985-2890
Steve Maxwell, Membership	emax_1@mchsi.com	997-9607
Marge Mangan, Benefits	marge143@frontier.com	982-2218 889-0702
Loren Taylor, Information Services	lorentaylor13@hotmail.com	925-6863
Tom Oates, Finance	toates@frontier.com	889-0089
John Harland, Region 18 Director	harland@4siwi.com	995-1694

WILLIAMSON County Treasurer's Report

DATE	9/13/2017	
BEGINNING BALANCE		\$21,700.86
INCOME		
DUES		\$150.00
EXPENSES		
MEETING EXPENSE		\$220.00
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ENDING BALANCE		\$21,320.86

IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR 2017 LOCAL AND STATE DUES. LOCAL DUES ARE NOW \$10.00 PER YEAR
Please make your LOCAL dues check to: WCIRTA. Mail to: DON KRAGNESS, Treasurer,
14802 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951